Sports

Cte Ags cut down by Titans in NCAA regional

By Hal L. Hammons

Assistant Sports Editor
TARKVILLE, Miss. — Before
bottom of the ninth inning rted Monday, Cal State-Fullerton cher Paul Johnson asked his team ether they wanted to play another astrophic half-inning or nine more that night.
The Titans trailed Texas A&M 3to be morel, and a loss meant the teams would ave to play another game that night Coast. The for the championship. A Fullerton

of the Wowin in the afternoon game, however, the hum would end the South Regional early. five runs and 20 incredible minas expendutes later, Johnson's question got a tat right convincing answer, as the Aggies fell 6-3, eliminating A&M from post-seafrom Jule son play one step shy of the College with real World Series.

The Aggie outfielders didn't even over 14 turn around to watch Mike Ross' three-run game-ending home run

canes and soar over Dudy Noble Field's left-center field fence.

Dominica A&M looked like it had the game this with iced away, and with it a trip to ough pur Omaha. Not only were there two out days later in the ninth, the Aggies had a well-ricane of rested staff waiting which figured on giving them a big advantage in the the Assecond game.

ph. Hum. A&M Coach Mark Johnson said,

ph. Hum. With momentum gathered, I but fizze thought we'd win. I had a strong ctoher. eling we'd go to Omaha. But it was a classic case of putting

e cart before the horse. Ralph Ramirez walked to start the ball-size inning. But Scott Centala, 5-1, struck out the next two batters.

But then the wheels started to o warmingtone off. Greg Mannion walked, ght in and Rex Peters and Shane Flores Smith a singled to tie the game at 3. Ross' ner put the game away.

Fullerton Coach Larry Cochell "Anytime Ross and (Keith) aub come to the plate with men on , we have a chance.

The Titans were scoreless until aub's solo shot in the eighth. The seemed to give Fullerton a little ost going into the ninth.

Brent Mayne, who had a 38-game tting streak snapped in the game, id, "We came out flat, but our tching kept us close. Anytime re within two or three runs, we're

the game.
They didn't look like they were in the game early. The Titans left rungers on base in five innings, including three on third base.

three on third base.

Single and a wild pitch put runners on second and third with no outs.

Infielder named A&M's 1988 MVP

Texas A&M shortstop Chuck Knoblauch added yet another award to his collection Tuesday when he was selected by his teammates as this year's Marion Pugh Most Valuable Player for the

Knoblauch led the team in hitting with a .365 average and in stolen bases with 24. After moving from centerfield, where he was an All-Southwest Conference selection last year, to shortstop, the sophomore was a consensus All-SWC selectee again this season. Knoblauch was also the MVP of the NCAA South Regional

Senior Sean Snedeker was chosen by his teammates as the Pat Olsen Outstanding Pitcher for

year. He's to be congratulated."

John Byington, on base with a single,

ran halfway through the coach's

"hold" sign at third after Tom Car-

cione doubled in the top of the

fourth. Byington was caught be-tween third and home and was

Terry Taylor put A&M ahead 2-0 with a single that scored Carcione and would have scored Byington as

single, and Kirk Thompson's bunt

Mike Easley led off the fifth with a

the season. Snedeker had a 9-2 record with a 3.50 earned run average. He struck out 87 batters in 97% innings and led the team with six complete games.

Senior outfielder Tim McWil-

liam was awarded the Wally Moon Award, which recognizes the team's most improved player. McWilliam had a .362 average with seven home runs and 51

Team captain Maury Martin was the recipient of the Marion Pugh Spirit Award for displaying desire and leadership qualities.

The Aggies set school records

this year in wins with 20, winning percentage with .776, home runs with 80, and saves with 20, which was also a SWC record.

was removed from the rotation ear-Easley was caught off base when Chuck Knoblauch grounded hard to lier in the tournament because of third and was tagged out. Tim Mc-William singled to score Thompson from second, but the score was 3-0 shoulder trouble, surprised everyone by going longer than he had all Riscen gave up six hits and walked and not 5-0 like it easily could have four, but he allowed no runs through seven innings before yield-ing the mound to Centala in the

Knoblauch, voted the All-South Regional Tournament Most Valu-able Player, said, "Those things hap-pen. You make mistakes. When you eighth.

Mark Johnson said, "I thought
Fred did a good job. We extended
him; he threw more than he had all lose everybody looks to find what went wrong. We had a big lead, and we shouldn't have lost it."

Knoblauch went 7-for-17 in the Two baserunning errors cost A&M runs in the middle innings.

tournament with a home run and two steals. He also made several sterling defensive plays, robbing oppo-

cord for career hits during the tour-nament, was voted to the All-Regional team. He went 7-for-16 with a homer and a steal, but he was hitless the way in four at-bats in the championship

the winner of Saturday af- and score four runs.

Johnson pitched 71/3 innings Sunday night against Mississippi State to pick up the win and eliminate the Bulldogs. With his five innings of work against A&M, he gave up a total of 10 hits and two runs. He pitched against A&M with less than a full day's rest.

The Aggies ended their season at 52-15 — a team record for wins in a

season. Fullerton goes to 41-16. The Aggies started regional play in poor fashion, losing to sixth-seeded Middle Tennessee State 3-1

The Blue Raiders were led by a tered six A&M hits, walked one, and continually forced the Aggies into easy outs. A&M had 12 fly outs in the game.

Livingstone said after the game, "We don't even know if they can play defense. All they had to do was catch

"Throughout the season we were used to sitting back and letting things happen. When you get up against a good pitcher, you can't do

Livingstone's home run in the sixth was the only run for A&M.

The Aggies wasted a six-hit effort Sean Snedeker, 9-1. After giving up three runs in the first three innings, Snedeker allowed only one hit and one walk.

A&M rebounded for an 8-6 win Friday afternoon in an elimination game against Western Carolina, who had taken Mississippi State to 12 in-

nings before losing the night before.
WCU has played eight post-season game in the past four years and lost all of them. All but one of them have been either extra-inning games or had margins of fewer than three runs. All four years they have lost to the No. 1 seed.

nents of hits up the middle.

Teammate Scott Livingstone, who broke the Southwest Conference re
The Aggies stayed alive with a 6-2 win over Missouri Sunday afternoon, eliminating the Tigers.

Centala came on to relieve Randy Pryor, 8-5, in the sixth inning and held the Tigers to one hit the rest of

A&M was led by the top of their game.

Also on the team were Titans
Johnson, Kaub, and Longo Garcia

batting order, as Chuck Knoblauch,
Tim McWilliam and Scott Livingstone combined to go 8-for-13

Winning isn't everything, not even in NCAA regionals

talk about heroes. I'm not talking

about

foot-long sandwiches Milton-esque I don't even

mean modern-day demigods

Babe Ruth or Johnny Unitas. I mean real heroes. Men or women who fight considerable odds in the face of adversity struggling, frequently losing, but usually doing better than was expected, and always doing their

Hal L.

Hammons

Such a man is Middle Tennessee State pitcher David

Richardson will go down in the record books as having pitched in three games in the South Regional with a record of 1-0 and a 3.77 earned run average. Hardly eye-catching numbers.

The story goes beyond the numbers, though.

His first game was the one he'd like to remember — the one that gets a full page in the family scrapbook. It was the first game of the tournament, and he was leading his sixth-seeded Blue Raiders against top-seeded, fifth-ranked Texas A&M.

He wasn't overpowering. He just won, holding the Aggies to ix hits and one run. Very few balls were hit hard, as A&M hit into an amazing 12 fly outs. Richardson simply didn't let

the Aggies get into the game. The results: MTSU vaulted into the winners bracket; A&M was put into permanent "win-or-die" MTSU looked like legitimate

shots to take it all; behind Richardson's pitching they were a tough team to beat.

Reality started to set in Saturday against Missouri. The Tigers pounded Raider pitching;

even their outs were line drives. The dam broke in the eighth; Missouri erupted for six runs in the inning. Richardson was asked to come in with one out to stop the tide, but with only one day's rest he was no help. He too was lifted one out and three runs

But the real heroics came the next day. Mississippi State scored five runs in the first three innings off starter George Zimmerman, and Coach Steve Peterson called on Richardson yet again.

Against all odds, he shut the Bulldogs down. MSU scored only one run off him through the seventh, and the Raiders closed to within two runs.

But reality would not be denied. After a single run in the eighth, the flood gates opened wide in the ninth.

Peterson left him in for batter after batter, knowing his best pitcher was already on the mound - who else was he going to put in?

After he finally did pull Richardson, who risked serious injury if he had continued, Peterson looked pretty good for leaving him in so long — two replacement pitchers yielded four more runs before finally getting the Bulldogs out.

It wasn't the way the senior pitcher wanted to end his career —walking off the mound after being shelled for the second day in a row, his team irreversibly headed for a season-ending disaster. He might not even have heard the standing ovation he received from the partisan Bulldog crowd.

But he didn't have anything to be ashamed of. And no matter how low his head was drooped, he probably knew that deep

And even though there were 10 pitchers in the tournament with better ERAs, I didn't hesitate about putting him on my ballot for All-Regional honors.

There are more important things than numbers. Even in

Home courts not important in East

rise the Detroit Pistons and Bos- at the Silverdome. on Celtics are tied at 2. What is urprising is how it got that way.

The Pistons took a 2-1 lead in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference finals thanks to a victory in the series opener when they snapped a 21-game losing streak at Boston Garden.

The Celtics, by holding Detroit to 10 points in both the first and fourth quarters, broke a ninegame losing streak at the Pontiac Silverdome Monday with a 79-78 victory. It was the first time since 1956 that a team won a playoff game with fewer than 80 points.

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Game 5 will be at Boston Garden Wednesday night, with neither team as confident about winning at home as it was before the series began. "The homecourt advantage

isn't going to win it for us," Celtics guard Danny Ainge said. "They

BOSTON (AP) — It's no surbeat us at home and we beat them

"It's 2-2 and both teams are capable of beating each other on their homecourt," Pistons guard Isiah Thomas said. "It's a matter of who's playing the best that

There's a lot of basketball left to be played by both teams."

"We know we can play with them, win against them," De-troit's Vinnie Johnson said. 'We're just going to have to go up there and steal another game.

On Monday, the Celtics continued in a series-long shooting slump, but their drought has never reached the proportions that Detroit's did in Game 4.

Boston shot 40 percent from the field. The much-maligned Celtics bench, outscored 128-36 in the series, had one point.

But the Pistons were 26-for-78 from the field - 33.3 percent.

Forum welcome sight for Lakers

too. And when it comes to basket- is a best-of-three contest. ball, both the Los Angeles Lakers and Dallas Mavericks agree those things are in the Lakers' favor.

No one has figured out why the Forum is so tough for us," Dallas center James Donaldson center. "We don't know if it's because the Lakers play that much better."

The Mavericks have not won any of the eight playoff games they've played in the Forum since 1980. Mychal Thompson of the Lakers also thinks the smog helps.

breathing air that we can see," Thompson said.

best-of-seven Western Conference
final. Tied at 2-2, the Lakers won the
first two games of the series at the
first two games of the series at the
first two games of the series and was
Forum before moving to Reunion heavily criticized, but all that ended Arena in Dallas and losing two in a in Dallas.

INGLEWOOD, Calif. (AP) - row. The Lakers maintain home-There is a Forum here and smog, court advantage now that the series

Both teams view Game 5 as piv-

"I don't know what it is that makes us play our best in those situations," Byron Scott of the Lakers said. Maybe it's all the veterans we have. But I think everyone on this team

Dallas' Mark Aguirre believes the Lakers have asked too much of team leader Magic Johnson.

"We're a lot more comfortable ward spot and at guard, so they were counting on him to rebound and run the fast break," he said of his long-The Lakers and Mavericks met time friend. "That is a little much to Tuesday night for Game 5 of their ask."

Rose returns to dugout following 30-day hiatus

CHICAGO — Cincinnati Reds manager Pete Rose, who returns to the dugout Wednesday after a 30-day suspension for bumping an ump, says his stay on the sidelines could have been worse.

"I've seen every pitch, I've made out every lineup," said Rose, who was with the team in the clubhouse before and after every game.

"It would have been worse if I

hadn't been allowed to come out to the ballpark," he said. "But I've been able to sit back and evaluate the bal-

Rose was suspended and fined \$10,000 for shoving and bumping umpire Dave Pallone in an April 30 game against the New York Mets. Rose said he is not looking to his

return as anything special. 'All June 1 means is I can come ger.

back," he said. "I don't look at it as a

big deal.

"I hope it's the kind of game where the people of Chicago don't even know I'm in the dugout. I hope there are no arguments where I have to go out there with my handcuffs on.

Handcuffs?

Rose laughed again.
"Yes. I don't know how I'll react if

the ump hits me in the face again. It's hard to control your reactions and emotions. But if the ump makes a bad call again, I'm going to go out

He contends that when Pallone was pointing at him, the umpire poked him in the face with his fin-





